A Question of Manhood.

BY J. H. WORST.

Near the close of last year, and occasionally for about two years, items, editorials and articles, appeared in the *Gospel Messenger* (or *Brethren at Work*,) having a progressive ring. I have no desire to criticise that sheet but am willing to welcome truth coming from any source whatever. The items referred to and which occasionally come from German Baptist pulpits and laymen, may be covered by this simple quotation from the pen of the esteemed editor of the *Messenger*: "O beware, dear brethren and sisters, how you use this power. Nothing but a clear violation of plain Gospel truth is sufficient cause for expulsion," &c. This quotation harmonizes with similar expressions made by many members of that fraternity, within the past year, and deserves a brief commentary. It affects the manhood and integrity of every one making or entertaining such sentiments. Taking it for granted that they are sincere, I am puzzled to know why their conduct should so belie their sentiments. There are thousands living to-day, who have been expelled from their fraternity without violating the Gospel and without being so charged, and they know it. Worse, still, those so excommunicated are branded as "heathen." These same writers and speakers either personally co-operated with the machinery of expulsion or tacitly gave it their moral support, and are still doing so, in the face of their oft-repeated assertions that "nothing but a clear violation of plain Gospel truth is sufficient cause for expulsion," Not one of them has put forth a tangible effort to stay the disreputable work, nor discountenanced what they avow to be sinful after it was done. Whether a brother or sister were expelled for adultery, or infidelity to A. M. mandates, they in common with the remainder of their fraternity, thrust them, in either case, beyond the pale of Christian courtesy and brand them as heathen. Even though the offenses which resulted in expulsion were of the most trivial character, such as saying they were progressive, or for not sanctioning expulsions without trial or Gospel authority, yet these same men hold them and treat them as heathen, while penning the words, "nothing but a clear violation of plain Gospel truth is sufficient cause for expulsion."

Heathen! At its name my blood boils. Not that I despise the untutored of uncivilized lands, but that it should come from brethren, and be applied to those whose piety and intelligence would not suffer by comparison. The term implies ignorance and want of culture—a total lack of knowledge regarding God and the higher attributes of life. Now, for men and women professing Christian refinement, to find gratification in elevating themselves by applying this venal epithet to at least their equals, as a means of degrading them, is reprehensible. Is not this the motive? Do they not follow the epithet with a legalized ceremony making it a church crime for any member thereof to defile himself by extending Christian courtesy to a "heathen?" Do they not recognize the stamp of inferiority upon every "heathen"(?) and make it, by legal enactment, a case of defilement for one of their number to recognize such a person as a fellow member of the body of Christ?

There is a species of honorable emulation by which men take high rank by hard study, earnest application, and persistent devotion to self-improvement, and they merit all they attain; but for men to appear more noble by branding their fellowmen heathen, and then to so legislate that they must be held as low as the term indicates, is a disgrace to this age, an insult to modern civilization, and a libel on Christianity. And how men like James Quinter, Enoch Eby, Daniel P. Saylor, and others who rank high intellectually and who are too near the grave to sanction anything dishonorable, can countenance such degrading competition is marvelous.

The senseless "cast distinctions of the east, wherein dead ancesters and wealth constitutes a man's standing in society, pales before this species of social prostitution; the grog-shop habit of applying indecent epithets to a victim to call down the jeers of those present for his discomfiture and degradation, is only its duplication in part, for no legal contingency makes it perpetual in the latter instance. Can any one doubt the source that prompts such conduct in either case?

But perhaps the most humiliating aspect is to be denominated a heathen by men of doubtful character and by men of known lack of veracity, who always manifest their importance with unbearable coarseness. From such it hurts although too low in origin to notice. It is bad enough to be generally treated as a "heathen man and a publican" by the writers of such nice sentiments as quoted and by men of piety and culture, but to be sneered at by a common liar and vulgar egotist is detestible despite the fine theory about "casting your pearls before swine."

Some men are sensitive. Most men are. We all take some degree of pride in our citizenship and nationality, and such epithets coming from such a source with such a motive and so near the twentieth century are a rebuke to the church machinery that hatched it. Average American intelligence and even incipient piety is insulted and outraged at such an exhibition of "brotherly love," and yet we must bear it. I know what it is to be expelled without being charged with violating the Gospel, by minority, by a *coup d'etat* on the part of elders, and by hearing the verdict before a single witness was examined or a tittle of evidence was adduced, and that too while the prosecuting elder had a half dozen charges pending against him for lying, dishonesty, misrepresentation, &c., regularly preferred weeks beforehand, and which could be sustained by not less than thirty witnesess. The charges were ignored, and I was expelled for the lesser offense. Those same elders, who pretended to be my friends, in common with the guilty elder, now hold and treat me as a heathen, and the elder whose veracity is known to be at double discount with every one of them, is held as a Christian and treated as such. This is what makes one doubt a man's honesty. This is only one instance out of a hundred, and to bring out and make disreputable such evident hypocrisy by exposing it, is the offense that made some of us heathens, and because hundreds of others would not disfellowship us, they were heathenized also.

Now comes the eastern editor of the *Messenger*, avowing the very sentiments we all proclaimed, and following comes legion practicing the identical liberties for which we contended, and yet all of them find gratification in upholding the cast distinction—heathen. Instinctively I turn to Rom. 2:1—3, for consolation. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." "And thinkest thou thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

It has come to be a question of manhood. We have your sentiments on paper and your conduct outside of the sanctum. Scores of others are on probation as well. Two years have passed since these sentiments were first promulgated, and yet not one tangible effort has been outlined to stay the mercenary work, and of the hundreds daily met by this class of German Baptists who were expelled without Gospel authority, not one is treated with Christian courtesy—except on the sly. I believe further if all were taken to account for uttering such sentiments, the last one would make an acknowledgement and ask to be forgiven.

There is some satisfaction in knowing by actual experience that one can be a man; that he dares to oppose official corruption though man and devils combine to destroy him. There is almost enough gratification in knowing that a man can be true to his convictions to compensate for the alienation of his dearest earthly friends, and there is more than ordinary satisfaction in seeing the dynasty of modern popery crumbling piece meal beneath the thunderbolts of truth.

The hypocrisy and infidelity that culminated into the present wretched chaos, will be driven hence with a whip of scorpions until their resting place is reached and labeled—anathema. The history of this movement will be written and read in the advanced thought of coming generations when the verdict cannot be biased by personal and family consideration.

Seeking the Kingdom.—No. 1.

BY S. B. FURRY.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness.—Matt. 6:23.

The text is the fundamental command brought home to man, and plainly indicates the Savior's mission as he uttered it in his sermon on the mountain. But it is almost invariably reversed. One says, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Another, "I have bought oxen and must go and prove them, have me excused." Another, "I have bought a piece of land and pray have me excused." And still another, "I have married and therefore I cannot come." Among our business men to-day, we have, "I will first seek position or wealth, and then I will seek the kingdom of God." While the more giddy will say, "Let me first enjoy the pleasures of the world and seek congenial society, and then I will seek the kingdom." Many are the excuses, and the command of Christ is made a secondary matter, and indeed not very often considered as a command; while thousands, yea, tens of thousands never seek the kingdom and are lost. How often do we see those who have acquired wealth, honor and position, and those who have enjoyed the sinful pleasures, lose all desire to seek the kingdom of God. Satan has secured them so thoroughly, that if possible, he will never let the thought of seeking the kingdom come into their minds. If a mother's prayer, a father's petition, a minister's pleading should awaken them, then Satan will assure them of plenty of time and finally divert them from seeking at all. I claim there is great danger in trifling with the command of Him who came to seek and to save, and this was the Redeemer's commission. There is really very little to forsake except our own will and carnal desires. Just consider the promise attached to our text: "And all these things shall be added unto you." What things? Why the things that sustain you and make you comfortable in this life. What more do ye want, O ye of little faith? "Behold the fowls of the air! your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you?" He will provide for you, only obey his command first, and then you should be industrious to provide for your own. He will take care of all who put their trust in him. Trust Jesus and he will trust you. Confide in him, and whatever your hands find to do, do it honestly, with a view of self-support. An indolent man is no true Christian, "He that provideth not for his own, especially for his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." An infidel provides for his own. He wishes you to be better than he, though commands you first to seek the kingdom and then by your industry you will suceeed in your temporal calling. God wishes all to make a lawful effort on their part in temporal as well as spiritual, only he makes the spiritual the more important and first to attend to. But if you should have to go through poverty to heaven, how much better than to go through riches to hell. Then I appeal to you with the Savior, "Seek first the kingdom of God."

The Swiss Artist.

An infidel Swiss artist who was serving the devil to the extent of his ability, went to Sheffield, England, in 1880. There he was asked to make a caricature of a Salvation Army meeting. He went there on that errand, and scanned the faces of the people, he—with his heart like the troubled sea that could not find rest, tossed and driven by tempests of passion, and tormented by a conscience burdened with sin—looked on the assembled worshipers and saw peace written on their faces, and an inward joy beaming from their countenances. The sight convinced him of his sinfulness. He saw that those people had something which he lacked and which he needed. He turned his feet unto God's testimonies, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, found peace through the blood of the cross, and rejoiced with the rejoicing ones.

How many others there are as weary and sad as he, who only need to see—instead of the empty formalists of the day—loving, active, fervent, zealous, happy Christians, to be convinced of their own need, and led to turn to God and find salvation through Him who died to redeem the lost.—SEL.